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The Specialization Years

(Grade 10 to Graduation)



Guide to Discussion and Response

Restructuring of Education
December, 1991

THE SPECIALIZATION YEARS WORK TEAM

The Ministry of Education wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the following persons who participated in the development of The Specialization Years: Guide to Discussion and Response.

* * * * *

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Reaching People Who Have Opinions

This is a guide to encourage discussion about policy options for the Specialization Years (Grade 10 to graduation). Your comments will assist in exploring options and developing policy for Ontario schools.

Opinions are needed from students, parents, trustees, professional educators, labour and business representatives - everyone with an interest in education.

Both individuals and groups are invited to:

- *respond to any or all of the issues*
- *raise further issues*
- *offer additional proposals.*

Identifying Issues for the Paper

The Specialization Years Work Team identified issues using the following:

- Discussion groups (teachers, administrators, labour and business representatives, trustees, parents, students) conducted throughout the province in both English and French
- Discussions with representatives of Ontario Teachers' Federation affiliates
- Advice from schools and leading educators
- Review of available literature
- Background information prepared by the Curriculum Policy Development Branch
- Advice from Ministry of Education Regional Liaison Group
- Examination of programs and studies from other jurisdictions
- Deliberations within work team meetings and in co-ordination with other work teams

How to Respond to this Paper

Step 1 • *Decide whether you want to respond individually or organize a group.*

You are free to make as many copies as you need.

Step 2 • *Read through the paper and choose the sections upon which you wish to comment.*

The Education With a Purpose section

- *You are asked to comment on how you want education to serve individuals and society.*
- *These are topics on which many readers will wish to comment.*

The General Topics section

- *These are broad topics of general interest.*
- *Certain groups will have a special interest in some of these topics.*
- *You may have opinions on many, or just a few, of these topics.*

The Specific Issues and Policy Options section

- *This is a close look at some specific educational topics.*
- *Current Ministry of Education policy is stated.*
- *You may find these issues more technical, and the language less familiar. You may, therefore, wish to select those topics in which you have a particular interest, or seek background material about regulations, policies, and educational theory.*

- Step 3** • *Using the response booklet, comment on as many or as few topics as you wish.*
- *You may wish to raise further issues or offer additional proposals*
 - *For additional information or clarification you may contact the Ministry of Educational Regional Office in your area (see addresses page iv).*

The Guide to Discussion and Response and the Response Booklet are only meant to motivate your comments. You should not be restricted either by their content or their form.

You may wish to submit your own model of what education should be like from grade 10 to graduation.

You are free to do so in whatever form or detail you feel would best communicate your proposals.

- Step 4** • *Send responses to:*

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It will help us if you send your responses as soon as possible and no later than July 10, 1992.

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The Specialization Years



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THE CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

Ontario students live in a society that is changing rapidly. Aspects of this change include the increasing diversity in our population, shifts in family structure, and changing expectations in the workplace. Our schools must respond to the changing needs and expectations of society so that students are prepared to live productive and satisfying lives.

The people of Ontario, especially parents, want to know what schools are accomplishing and how well. In addition, the rapidly changing labour market is creating growing demands for a better educated work force. It is important that students acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to contribute to and help to shape changes in their society.

The Ontario government is convinced that the education system must be examined now to determine how best to meet new needs.

In April 1989, plans were announced to restructure and enhance the quality of education in Ontario. The Ministry of Education established the Learning Programs Secretariat to manage the initiative. Restructuring will occur through a planned consultation process involving all partners in education and will include all aspects of Ontario's education system from Junior Kindergarten to the end of secondary school.

The Specialization Years Within the Restructuring Initiative

Student progress, for the purposes of the restructuring initiative, has been divided into four stages: Early Years (Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten), Formative Years (Grade 1 to 6), Transition Years (Grade 7 to 9), and Specialization Years (Grade 10 to graduation).

The number of years that a student takes to complete the specialization years will be different depending upon the choices made.

Students may complete the prerequisites for entrance to apprenticeships, colleges of applied arts and technology, or university within this stage of education.

Characteristics of the Specialization Years

The Specialization Years - Grade 10 to graduation - must provide students with learning experiences that will enable them to assume growing responsibility for their intellectual development, personal and social development, and career development.

In making policy we must remember the differences in students. Students at this stage in education may be adolescents, young adults, and mature adults.

Adolescents and young adults have gone through the physiological and emotional changes of early adolescence. They are striving to achieve a greater degree of independence and self-understanding. Most are exploring career, education, and lifestyle opportunities that will help prepare them for the choices they will need to make, as independent adults, for themselves and their society.¹

Adult learners are a significant and growing group at this level of education. Many of them are returning to school, usually to upgrade their employment skills or to fulfil the prerequisites for post-secondary education. They will already have assumed a variety of responsibilities in their lives and will have differing educational needs.

This diversity of age and experience, from adolescent to mature adult, highlights the image of the learner as a self-motivated, self-directed, lifelong learner who pursues knowledge in a social and interdependent context. This learner is aware of both the processes and uses of learning, derives a sense of self-worth and confidence from a variety of accomplishments, and contributes effectively to a changing society. This image of the learner is an essential consideration in the provision of education programs in Ontario.

Two Publicly Funded School Systems

Public secondary schools are open and accessible to all on an equal basis and are founded upon the positive societal values which, in general, Canadians hold and regard as essential to the well-being of our society. These values transcend cultures and faiths, reinforce democratic rights and responsibilities, and are founded on a fundamental belief in the worth of all persons. You may wish to comment on the role of such general values when discussing policy options.

Roman Catholic separate schools in the province of Ontario have a role in integrating the faith and culture of the Roman Catholic Church with the education program. The goals of Catholic education complement the goals of education set out by the Ontario Ministry of Education. These goals are therefore endorsed by Catholic schools and extended to consider the distinctive vision and religious dimension of a Catholic school. In this sense, the Catholic school strives to be a community where faith and culture merge with learning. You may wish to consider this dimension of the school in commenting on policy options.

¹Two research projects have been commissioned to provide further information about learners in the 15- to 18-year-old age group. One will examine the learner in the English-language school system and the other will examine the learner in the French-language system.

Education with a Purpose

Shaping the system to suit our purposes

To make good decisions we need to know your basic ideas about schools (student needs, the school and the family, the school and the community, the school and society).

Questions in this section allow you to express your view of what schools should be accomplishing from grade 10 to graduation.

You may wish to make statements about education in general and what the school environment should be like.

You may wish to answer these questions or to express your general ideas when responding to specific issues - either or both are possible.

Here are a few basic questions about purpose in the Specialization Years.

Space for response is provided in the Response Booklet.

P1. What are the most important educational needs of students at this stage in school?

P2. What should being a secondary school graduate mean?

P3. How should the role of the school and the role of the family be related?

P4. How should the school reflect the needs of our society to be a strong democracy and be economically successful?

P5. How should schools contribute to cultural awareness and development?

Many other questions about the purpose of education could be asked.

You may submit the questions you feel are most important along with your responses. Space will be provided for these in the response booklet.

General Topics

General Topics

* * *

This section explains each topic very briefly by giving the general nature of the concern, and why it should be considered in discussing policy.

These concise reminders are intended to encourage a variety of responses that will help us in examining these important aspects of education.

Your discussion may be brief or lengthy depending on your knowledge of, or interest in, the area.

For example, your response to the general topics could be in three forms:

1. For some topics you may wish to simply comment in the space provided in the response booklet by saying:
 - a. what you think is important about what is being done now
 - b. what changes are needed
2. In most cases you will see connections with some of the specific issues in the last section of the paper (page 9 to 38). Your comments on the policy options in that section, could, therefore, include the effect you feel the option would have regarding any of the general topics.
3. Many of these topics are so far-reaching that you could write an extensive paper on the one topic alone, outlining the many complex issues and policy options involved. If the topic is your central concern, you may wish to prepare such a detailed paper as your response.

- The following are some general topics that have been raised.
- You are invited to suggest additional topics that you think are important.
- Space is provided in the Response Booklet for your comments.

G1. Adult Education

An increasing number of adults are pursuing educational programs. These may include basic education programs, credit courses in secondary schools, or activities related to ongoing interests.

We should remember the learning styles and needs of adults when developing policy for the Specialization Years.

G2. Assessment and Evaluation

Both student evaluation and program evaluation are important. Opinions differ widely about both.

Student evaluation policies must provide a framework for helping students to make informed decisions about available choices. Such policies must ensure that evaluation methods are free from bias of any kind.

Policy options must also include appropriate plans for program evaluation. This includes overall assessment of achievements to determine the success of the program.

G3. Educational Technology

New technology may change what is taught, allow new ways to learn and acquire information, and enable different school organization and communication.

Interactive television, computer technology, and other communications innovations, for example, may allow both students and teachers to undertake activities at times, and in locations, that would otherwise have been difficult.

Policies that encourage learning about, and through, technology may answer many specific issues.

G4. French as a Second Language (FSL)

Students entering English-language secondary schools may have taken core, extended, or immersion programs in French or, in some instances, may not have participated in any program in French.

Core French is a program of instruction in the subject of French only. Extended and immersion French programs may involve teaching *any subject* in the French language (including the subject of French).

Because extended and immersion French involve most subject areas and school activities, it is important to assess their implications for students, staffing, organization, and learning materials when considering policy options.

G5. French-language Schools

French-language schools have a mandate to nurture French culture and language as well as to ensure a quality education program.

"L'animation culturelle" promotes francophone culture in Ontario by organizing a variety of activities that strengthen the student's sense of belonging to, and involvement in, the French community.

There are many issues that are of special concern to French-language schools. Some apply equally to all schools, but others are of greater significance to particular regions. The availability of learning and resource materials in French when implementing a program of study is a province-wide issue, whereas providing in-service education for francophone teachers is more difficult in certain areas.

You may wish to consider the distinctive cultural and linguistic responsibility of French-language schools when commenting on policy options. In addition, you may identify other issues unique to French-language schools.

G6. Gender Equity

The philosophy of gender equity should be part of all aspects of the school's curriculum, policies, teaching methods, learning materials, and assessment procedures, as well as the attitudes and expectations of its staff in all of their interaction with students, with parents, and with the community.

The school environment should therefore be one in which all human qualities are valued regardless of gender. Unquestioned traditions and practices should not limit choice or the development of a student's potential. There should be an atmosphere

that is free from harassment throughout the school and in all school activities. Gender bias should be entirely removed from teaching techniques and instructional materials.

Policy suggestions should include gender equity requirements. You may wish, therefore, to suggest some special ways in which this policy could be better communicated and implemented.

G7. Integrated Services (Health, Social, Educational)

Health and social needs of students and the community are often closely connected to educational needs. Schools and agencies providing health and social services must work together. Since students spend a large part of their day at school, the school might provide a focus for such co-operation.

Co-ordination of programs at the local, regional, and provincial level should be planned when developing policy.

G8. Native Education

It is important to ensure that Native students are expressly considered within each of the issues raised. The needs of Native students who live on reserves as well as those whose families live off reserves must be taken into account.

There are concerns about:

- the number of Native students who must leave their reserves in order to attend secondary school
- the lack of secondary schools under Native control
- the need for Native participation in developing curriculum for Native students
- the high drop-out rate among Native students in secondary schools and the disproportionate number of Native students in basic and general level programs
- the provision of Native language programs and Native topics as part of the curriculum

The implication of these concerns may be different for Native students in Native schools than for those who attend schools operated by school boards.

We must be sure that we develop policies to provide educational programs in the Specialization Years that serve all students of Native background and promote the importance of Native culture, language, and tradition.

G9. Needs of Students New to Canada

Students new to Canada, including immigrants and refugees, have many and different educational needs because of their varied cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. The provision of appropriate programs for these students can present unique demands.

It is important that the implications of educational policies for students new to Canada be taken into account.

G10. Racial and Ethno-cultural Equity

Students in Ontario bring an expanding range of cultures and differing religious, linguistic, ethnic and racial backgrounds to the school.

The school environment, including the curriculum, should recognize and value the presence of such diversity as well as provide an awareness and sensitivity to the serious effects of racism in any form. Cultural, ethnic and racial biases can limit the opportunities for students who appear different because of their religion, language, culture or race.

The variety of religious, linguistic, ethnic and racial backgrounds must be considered in forming policy.

G11. School Culture

A school's culture includes the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of students and staff. The atmosphere in a school has a direct effect on students' feelings about the school's quality.

Much of the research on education indicates that school atmosphere has a vital role in contributing to the overall effectiveness of the school.

Although it may not always be possible to have policies that address the school culture directly, you are encouraged to comment on how different decisions might affect school atmosphere. If you feel that certain policies would help improve the general school culture, this should be noted.

G12. Special Education Programs and Services

The needs of students identified as exceptional must be considered in making policy. Policies must ensure that the school's programs and services are planned for *all* students.

Schools must be flexible. Instruction about exceptionalities must be available to school staff. Extensive support services and resources should be planned to meet the needs of exceptional students. Guidance regarding educational and career choices, as with all students, is important.

Remembering the needs of exceptional pupils during policy discussions can help us make decisions that benefit all students in the school.

G13. Student Retention

There is a general concern regarding the number of students who do not graduate from secondary school.

Future educational opportunities, personal lives, and career potential are affected by a decision to leave school. Education programs must, therefore, be designed so that students see their benefit. In addition, policies and practices at all levels of education must be designed to help students make informed choices.

G14. Teacher Education

Teacher education must be considered as a crucial element in putting policy options into practice.

You are invited to suggest the types of in-service or pre-service needs that would arise from specific policy options. (*"In-service" refers to education for practising teachers - "Pre-service" refers to education undertaken before becoming a teacher.*)

Good teacher education programs can ensure that policies have the desired result. There should, therefore, be careful discussion of what teacher education is needed and how it should be done.

Specific Issues and Policy Options

Issue No. S1: Integrated Learning Activities

Learning is often at its best when several school subjects are involved (for example, mathematics, language, science, business studies). Greater use of themes and broad problems rather than study that is limited to one subject is encouraged in educational literature. Arranging activities of this nature involves collaboration among departments for both planning and teaching of topics and courses that use expertise from several subjects.

Teachers attempting to design courses combining subjects must make difficult administrative decisions as to how credits are assigned (e.g., problems posed by multiple course codes, minimum 1/4 credit modules, teacher assignments, the complexity of reporting on student achievement).

Present Policy

- Ministry guidelines are written for specific subjects.
- Most teacher qualification courses at the secondary school level are for specific subjects.
- Schools wishing to design courses using more than one school subject are encouraged to use the provision in Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Divisions (OSIS), section 4.5, and build courses from fractional credits. No credit assignment of less than one-quarter credit is permitted. (*A credit means a student has completed a course of 110 hours.*)
- School boards may apply to the ministry for approval of non-guideline courses under OSIS, section 6.9.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Encourage the development of courses based on more than one school subject.
Groups of courses or parts of courses could be planned in the same manner.
- c. Allow locally developed courses that use ideas from several ministry guidelines.
Provide individual course codes for such courses.
- d. Develop guidelines based on general skills that apply to several subjects.
- e. Provide teacher education courses related to integrated learning activities (in addition to teacher qualification for school subjects).
- f. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S2: Overcrowded Curriculum

Social changes and community needs are adding to what students must learn in school. Programs on societal issues such as substance abuse and AIDS education are needed. Support to students in their personal and career development, additional information on career education, job shadowing, and university and community college visits require school time. In addition, schools attempt to provide a community focus through visits from local and provincial speakers and student involvement in community service programs.

Such activities seem to impose on the time spent on existing objectives.

There is also a need for teacher in-service to provide the required knowledge and teaching skills to achieve the objectives of these new programs.

Present Policy

- The goals of education recognize the need to help each student to achieve his/her potential in physical, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, and moral development (OSIS, section 1.3).
- OSIS also acknowledges the role of life skills in learning activities and emphasizes that, in a life-skills approach to curriculum, it is important to make explicit the relationship between knowledge and everyday life, the usefulness of knowledge, and the application of knowledge to everyday life (OSIS, section 2.9).
- Although some courses (e.g., Health and Physical Education) are designed to cover topics like this, not all students take the courses in which the topics occur.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Provide for time to study key societal and life issues, in each year of the Specialization Years and give credit for this achievement.
- c. Provide time to study key societal and life issues and require that all student take part. (Credit would be granted for the achievement.)
- d. Provide greater flexibility in credit courses to allow for the inclusion of key societal and life issues.
- e. Encourage the development and delivery of courses in co-operation with community agencies and other external organizations.
- f. Provide teacher education dealing with social and community issues in the curriculum.
- g. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S3: Subject Specialization in Teacher Education

The need for subject expertise has always been recognized at the secondary school level. Consequently, in-service and pre-service teacher education at the secondary level has concentrated on teaching strategies for specific subjects. Subject specialization alone may not be enough.

Present Policy

Most qualifications recorded for secondary school teachers are noted on the Ontario Teachers Qualifications Record Card by the subject discipline that will be taught, rather than by type of teaching strategy or general learning principles.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Provide more teacher education courses that are not subject specific.
- c. Expand the existing subject specific courses so that they provide more emphasis on varied learning processes, critical thinking skills, and cross-curricular themes and objectives.
- d. Include a wider variety of teaching strategies in pre-service courses, e.g., team teaching, interdisciplinary courses, co-operative learning, adapting to varied learning styles, independent learning.
- e. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S4: The Guidance Program

Three important parts of a guidance program are: exploring educational choices, investigating career options, and learning to make decisions in personal life.

Some questions are: Who should develop the guidance programs? Who should provide the programs? What do students need to learn? What is the right balance among personal counselling, career education and educational planning?

Present Policy

Each school must provide a guidance program that is planned and organized so that it gives students the learning experiences, personal assistance, and information to help them make informed and thoughtful decisions. The program should encourage students' awareness and understanding of themselves and how they relate to other people. It should help them to know what their choices are for future education and careers (OSIS, section 2.2).

The main points of policy are that the guidance program:

- is for all students
- is provided by all school staff
- is developed from both guidelines and the needs of students, parents, and community
- has a balance of instruction and counselling
- allows students to earn a maximum of three credits from their guidance courses (Career Planning, Guidance - Cooperative Education, or Peer Helping and Human Relations)

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Develop new policy that defines the results that students should realize.
- c. Develop new policy to clarify the roles and responsibilities for guidance counsellors and school staff.
- d. Develop new policy regarding the number of credits to be earned.
- e. Develop new policy to explain the role of the community in the guidance program.
- f. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S5: Gender and Educational/Career Choices

Certain vocational and school course choices are still not chosen equally by females and males.

A number of powerful social attitudes and social norms continue to limit the range of options from which young women make their career choices. These limiting forces begin their influence early in elementary school and have major impact well before the age at which a student makes formal career decisions.

The culture of the secondary school, and in some cases the classroom environment, work to confirm and entrench a limited range of options for many young women in the early years of their secondary school experience. This may influence many young women in their attitudes toward certain subjects and ultimately in their subject choices in the secondary school curriculum. Subject choices can broaden or limit future career choices.

Many forces outside the school contribute to this problem. Many young women feel that certain workplace environments are uninviting and some even hostile to women.

Such barriers to the development of a young woman's potential are unacceptable in human terms. Beyond the personal cost, there is also a major cost to society in not developing fully the potential of all young people, both female and male.

Present Policy

OSIS, section 2.13, outlines the broad issues of gender equity:

- It is the policy of the government of Ontario to extend equal educational opportunity to all students in the province. It is inappropriate for any school to deny a student access to a course or a program solely on the basis of the student's sex.
- Students should be able to see men and women in a variety of roles, exhibiting a wide range of human behaviour, abilities, and emotions. Materials and methods in our schools must reflect a society to which both men and women are contributing.

The philosophy of gender equity should permeate all aspects of the school's curriculum, policies, teaching methods and materials, and assessment procedures, as well as the attitudes and expectations of its staff and all their interaction with students, parents and the community.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Establish provincial awards for "Excellence in Mathematics/Science/Technology" for female and male students.
- b. Encourage processes to measure student attitudes about subjects and subject choices.
- c. Provide incentives for the development and delivery of in-service programs for teachers on gender issues.
- d. Provide incentives for partnerships with technology-oriented enterprises/agencies to provide work experience for male and female students in the field of science/technology.
- e. Encourage an outreach program by colleges of applied arts and technology and universities in which faculties of mathematics, science and technology provide orientation programs for secondary school female and male students.
- f. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S6: Co-operative Education/Work Experience

Co-operative education and work experience programs prove that students learn well when they see the real results of their effort. Students are motivated when they see that what happens in a classroom is related to something required at work.

Policies might encourage even more collaboration with community businesses, industries, and other agencies in the development of co-operative education programs.

Present Policy

OSIS, sections 5.11 and 5.12, and the document, *Policies and Procedures for Co-operative Education in Ontario Secondary Schools, 1989* outline policies to encourage co-operative education programs.

- The aim of the co-operative education program, which is built on a partnership between educators and business and industry, is to provide students with training and work experience that will enable them to make informed decisions about their future education and careers as well as help them make the transition from school to the world of work.
- A course offered in the co-operative education mode must be designed so that its in-school component forms at least one-third and not more than one-half of the total number of credit hours for the course.
- The work experience components should be planned according to the criteria prescribed for a co-operative education program. This approach establishes a timetable schedule for the out-of-school component in the workplace that does not result in any loss of time from the student's other courses.
- Ontario Academic Courses (OACs) may not be delivered through the co-operative education mode.
- Other experiential learning modes that may lead to co-operative education programs are: job shadowing, job twinning, job observation, and mentorship.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Require one or more co-operative education credits for graduation.
- c. Allow school boards greater flexibility in developing a variety of co-operative education modes to meet local needs.
- d. Broaden the scope of policies that involve co-operation with businesses, industries, and other agencies in the development of co-operative education programs.
- e. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S7: Small Schools

Many small schools experience difficulty in providing all the courses students need. The number of staff, the supplies, equipment, and other resources, are a problem. Small schools may have to share laboratory, library, and technological facilities with other schools. These difficulties may be even greater for schools in remote areas.

Teachers in small schools often have to develop expertise in several subjects. They may be teaching several subjects and may also have responsibilities for student services.

In many cases, it is not feasible for a small school to organize in-service sessions on its own because of the small number of staff involved. This difficulty is particularly acute for teachers in small French-language schools in predominantly anglophone areas who seek to obtain in-service in French locally.

Present Policy

OSIS, section 5.14, states that:

- It is essential for all schools to provide courses for students who will be leaving school to seek employment as well as those who will be attending post-secondary institutions. Co-operative arrangements among boards and schools are therefore essential if small secondary schools are to provide sufficient course options for their students.
- Where appropriate, the sharing of facilities and personnel between elementary and secondary schools should be encouraged. Such sharing could involve the use of the same physical plant, office personnel, and special equipment.
- To ensure that all students may qualify for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or Certificate of Education, principals of small secondary schools in remote areas may use the provision in OSIS, section 4.10 to replace up to two compulsory credits with additional courses from the remaining compulsory credits.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Increase the number of compulsory credits that can be substituted to obtain the OSSD or Certificate of Education.
- c. Encourage school boards with small schools to plan school programs with other means of earning credits (e.g., distance education programs, correspondence courses, computer-assisted instruction).
- d. Encourage school boards with small schools to plan in-service programs that address their special needs.
- e. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S8: The Extra-curricular Program

A good extra-curricular program contributes to student achievement. It gives students opportunities for enrichment and further development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Interpersonal, leadership, and decision-making skills, are applied by students as they learn to assume greater responsibilities. Such activities also encourage positive relationships among teachers and students. Contact with others who are not in the same classes broadens social development.

Recent research confirms that the accessibility, visibility, and involvement of teachers in school life beyond the classroom help students feel that their school, and their school experiences, are "good" ones.

It seems important, therefore, that Ontario schools encourage extra-curricular programs that meet the needs and interests of students and staff.

Present Policy

- Although the term "extra-curricular" has been used above, because it is a commonly used term, it is not exactly correct. These programs are not considered to be outside, or in addition to, the curriculum. OSIS, section 5.17 uses the more correct term, "co-instructional" to refer to programs that include such activities as intramural and interschool programs, school clubs, and recreational activities. The term *curriculum* encompasses all learning experiences that are provided for students under the auspices of the school. It includes both the instructional and co-instructional programs.

- OSIS, section 5.17, states that:

To meet the needs of a wide variety of students whose abilities and interests vary greatly, the school should attempt to provide many different kinds of programs and activities.

- The duties of a teacher are defined in the Education Act, section 235.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Encourage, on a regular basis, assessment of the success of each school's extra-curricular program and how well it meets the needs of students and staff.
- c. Encourage schools to give recognition and to express appreciation to the staff members involved in the extra-curricular program.
- d. Encourage school boards to allocate resources for administering extra-curricular programs.
- e. Encourage schools to seek volunteers for extra-curricular programs from community members and individuals wishing to pursue careers in education.
- f. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S9: Curriculum Organization: Credit System, Graduation Requirements, Levels of Difficulty

Three important parts of curriculum organization in the Specialization Years are:

1. The organization and progression of curriculum by credits and grades
2. Graduation requirements
3. Levels of difficulty

The reasons for reviewing policy options regarding curriculum organization are as follows:

- It must be decided how the Specialization Years fit with the overall structure decided by the restructuring initiative.
- The present system, while meeting the needs learners have today, may need to be more flexible and to allow a wider range of options in order to meet the challenges of social and technological change.
- It has been suggested that the secondary school curriculum should be organized so that general learning themes are more coordinated.
- The requirements for a graduation diploma may need to be redefined as a result of the restructuring of the Transition Years.

Present Policy

OSIS, section 4.10, outlines diploma requirements from Grade 9 to graduation as a minimum of 30 credits. The 16 compulsory credits are:

- 5 credits in English/français (including at least 2 from the Senior Division)
- 1 credit in French as a second language/anglais
- 2 credits in mathematics
- 2 credits in science
- 1 credit in Canadian geography
- 1 credit in Canadian history
- 1 additional credit in the social sciences (Senior Division)
- 1 credit in arts
- 1 credit in physical and health education
- 1 credit in business studies or technological studies

The 14 elective credits are selected from available courses.

Secondary school courses may be offered at one or more of the following levels of difficulty:

- *Basic level* courses are designed to focus on the development of personal skills, social understanding, self-confidence, and preparation for employment.
- *General level* courses should be considered as appropriate preparation for employment, careers, or further education in certain programs in the colleges of applied arts and technology and other non-degree-granting post-secondary education institutions.
- *Advanced level* courses should focus on the development of academic skills and prepare students for entry to university or to certain programs of the colleges of applied arts and technology.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Replace the existing credit system in one or more of the Specialization Years (for example, in part of grade 10, all of grade 10, or all of the Specialization Years).
- c. Redefine the requirements for a graduation diploma in terms of the number and kind of compulsory credits and the total number of credits required.

- d. Eliminate levels of difficulty in one or more of the Specialization Years (for example, in part of grade 10, all of grade 10, or all of the Specialization Years).
- e. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

- *This issue is a complex combination of several factors. A decision on each part has an effect on the others.*
- *In view of the complexity you may wish to submit a detailed explanation of any model you recommend.*

Issue No. S10: Definition of a Credit

The present definition of a credit is based on the number of hours and the satisfactory completion of an amount of work at a level that could be reasonably expected of the students (OSIS, section 4.4).

While "full-credit" courses of a minimum of 110 hours of instruction are the norm, it has been suggested that another definition might encourage more innovative programs.

Present Policy

A credit is granted by the principal of a school on behalf of the Minister of Education in recognition of the successful completion of a course that has been scheduled for a minimum of 110 hours (OSIS, section 4.4).

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Redefine the credit.
- c. Develop policy that places greater emphasis on what is learned rather than on a specified minimum number of hours and the successful completion of course work.
- d. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S11: Credits for External Courses

Currently the Ministry accepts only music certificates as external courses to be counted as credits towards the OSSD. It has been suggested that, in addition to music, specialty subjects taught through accredited institutions outside the school be recognized as acceptable for credit under similar conditions as for music (OSIS, section 4.11).

Present Policy

Specific music certificates are accepted for either non-OAC credit or OAC credit to a maximum of one of each type earned outside the school. Music certificates that are accepted for credits are listed in Appendix C of OSIS.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy, whereby music certificates are the only recognized external courses.
- b. Change policy to allow other credits to be obtained through certificates in specialty subjects taught outside the school.
- c. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S12: The Meaning of the Graduation Diploma

To many employers and members of the community, gaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) signifies a minimum level of competency, a background in a common body of knowledge, and a common set of skills and attitudes. However, the OSSD was not designed to describe student achievement in these terms. The OSSD signifies only that the student has completed 30 credits, "subject to the conditions specified" in OSIS, section 4.10.

To understand specific details of an individual student's achievement, the OSSD must be examined along with the Ontario Student Transcript which contains information on the subjects studied, the level of difficulty, and the marks obtained.

Present Policy

There is a single secondary school graduation diploma, the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), which is granted upon the completion of a minimum of 30 credits (OSIS, section 4.9). The 30 credits must include 16 specific credits which are compulsory for every student in Ontario.

The OSSD is granted by the Minister of Education on the recommendation of the principal.

The compulsory credits are as follows:

- 5 credits in English/français (including at least 2 from the Senior Division)
- 1 credit in French as a second language/anglais
- 2 credits in mathematics
- 2 credits in science
- 1 credit in Canadian geography
- 1 credit in Canadian history
- 1 additional credit in the social sciences (Senior Division)
- 1 credit in the arts
- 1 credit in physical and health education
- 1 credit in business studies or technological studies

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Continue with the present single diploma but list the OACs on the diploma.
- c. Award a series of diplomas which reflect individual concentrations e.g., business studies, technological studies, university preparation, college preparation, etc.
- d. Eliminate the diploma as a document which signifies graduation and rely upon the Ontario Student Transcript to define graduation status and eligibility for post-secondary study.
- e. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S13: The Meaning of the Certificate of Education

Research has shown that falling behind in the accumulation of credits is one of the most important reasons why many students leave school before graduation.

The Certificate of Education is intended to provide students in Grade 9 or 10, who are considering leaving school, with a short term target of 14 credits. However, some educators feel that the Certificate of Education does not motivate students to stay in school.

Some vocational trades ask for certification that a candidate has completed Grade 10. The Certificate of Education may serve that purpose.

Generally, the Certificate of Education is not well known or understood by the community.

Present Policy

OSIS, section 4.12, specifies that a student who leaves school before graduation may receive, on request, a Certificate of Education if a minimum of 14 credits has been earned.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Retain the Certificate of Education and make it widely known to the community.
- b. Eliminate the Certificate of Education.
- c. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S14: Reporting Student Achievement

Report cards usually show a series of subject marks, class averages, teacher comments, and attendance information.

Some people feel that more information should be reported, for example, general skill and attitude development, community service, work experience, and activities beyond the classroom. This would assist students, teachers, and parents in advising students. Broader recognition for achievement might assist students in choosing future courses or careers.

Good reporting methods should encourage community and parent involvement that will help students.

Present Policy

OSIS, section 4.14, specifies that an Ontario Student Record* and an Ontario Student Transcript* be established and maintained for each student.

Further:

- Students and parents shall be made aware of the importance of the Ontario Student Record and its contents, and be aware of their right to know its contents and to examine it at any time.
- A record of credits gained (subject, mark, level of difficulty) is to be maintained in the Ontario Student Transcript.
- Only numerical marks can be used on the Ontario Student Transcript. On a student's report card, achievement may be recorded as a numerical mark or as a letter grade.

- * *Ontario Student Record* - the file which moves with the student from kindergarten to the completion of secondary school.
- * *Ontario Student Transcript* - the document which carries the student's record of credit accumulation - i.e., the number of credits, the subject, the level of difficulty, and the numerical mark.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Encourage many reporting methods in addition to report cards.
- c. Ensure that as many areas as possible (for example, knowledge, skills, attitudes, career education, extra-curricular involvement, leadership, community services) are reported.
- d. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S15: Religious Education Credits

It has been suggested that Roman Catholic schools be authorized to develop Religious Education courses at the senior level, in addition to the two presently authorized at the intermediate level.

It has also been suggested that private schools should be allowed to develop Religious Education courses in the same manner.

Present Policy

OSIS, section 6.10, exempts credit courses in Religious Education for Grades 9 and 10 in *Roman Catholic Separate Schools* from non-guideline-course approval, provided that:

- Such courses are developed by a school, or a group of schools, under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic separate school board; and
- Each student earns no more than one credit in Religious Education in each of Grades 9 and 10.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Extend the present policy to allow similar non-guideline courses in senior grades in Roman Catholic Separate Schools.
- c. Extend the policy to allow private schools to provide locally developed Religious Education courses in the same manner as Roman Catholic Separate Schools.
- d. Provide guidelines for the development of Religious Education courses.
- e. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S16: Delivery Models for Adult Education in the Specialization Years

Adult students taking secondary school courses have unique needs..

More specific policies to address the needs of adult students in secondary schools could be considered.

Present Policy

Programs for adult students in the Specialization Years are developed under the existing secondary school program policies. Under these policies, adult students may be accommodated through regular day school, part-time programs, correspondence programs, distance education programs using television and other communications technologies, interactive computer programs, etc.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue to accommodate adults within available secondary school program policies.
- b. Develop policies to ensure that appropriate modifications are made to programs when adults are involved.
- c. Develop policies that provide for the development of programs intended for adults only.
- d. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

Issue No. S17: Graduation Equivalence

There is increasing demand by adults to acquire status equivalent to secondary school graduation. Many other provinces provide a way for adults to acquire status equivalent to secondary school graduation. This is done using combinations of assessment of experiences and evaluation of competencies.

Present Policy

- Rather than graduation equivalence, OSIS, section 6.14, provides that the principal may grant equivalent credits *toward* graduation (to a maximum of 26 credits) in the following manner:

Maturity allowance

- up to 12 credits at the principal's discretion

Equivalent-education allowance

- course reported by a transcript that are considered acceptable by a principal (college or university courses do not qualify)

Apprenticeship-training allowance

- two equivalent credits for each period of apprenticeship training
(Apprenticeship and Tradesmen's Qualification Act, *Revised Statutes of Ontario*, 1980, chapter 24)

- Equivalent credits are recorded on the Ontario Student Transcript noting the *number* of credits granted only (not which courses have been assumed to be achieved). The student is given a statement showing the remaining requirements for completing the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Policy Options

- *The following are only some of the policy options that could be considered. Remember that you may also suggest other options.*
- *Space is provided in the response booklet for your comments on each option.*
- *You may wish to predict the effect of any option if it were made policy (whether it is close to your point of view, or you disagree with it, or it is your own suggestion).*

- a. Continue the present policy.
- b. Change the maturity allowance to permit a different maximum number of credits.

- c. Change the present policy to allow the principal to grant a number of credits that would allow a student to graduate without taking any more courses.
- d. Establish provincial criteria to ensure uniformity in granting credit equivalence.
- e. Provide provincial OSSD equivalence assessment and testing.
- f. Adopt other options. (Please explain your suggestions.)

- *There is a response booklet to use with this guide.*
- *You may comment on as many or as few topics as you wish.*
- *Your name (and type of group if a group response), address, telephone number should be filled in on the "Respondent Information" sheet at the front of the response booklet or attached to all the comments you send.*

A copy of the "Respondent Information" sheet is also included on the next page.

It will help us if you send your responses as soon as possible and no later than July 10, 1992.

- ***Send responses to:***

Peter Skuce
Specialization Years Work Team
Learning Programs Secretariat
17th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Queens Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Respondent Information

Name

Address

Contact Person

Telephone

Please ☒ in appropriate space.

Individuals

- Student ☐
- Parent or guardian ☐
- Teacher ☐
- Principal ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

Groups

- Parents' Association ☐
- School staff ☐
- Educators' association ☐
- Trustees' association ☐
- Faculty of education ☐
- School board ☐
- Business/Industry ☐
- Labour ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

If this is a group response, how many people have contributed?

